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## Articles in Today's Clips Thursday, July 19, 2007

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## Foster mom's rights stay terminated

July 19, 2007

BY JACK KRESNAK

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

The Michigan Court of Appeals has upheld a lower court judge's order terminating the parental rights of Charlsie Adams-Rogers, a former foster mother now in prison for manslaughter in the death of Isaac Lethbridge, a 2-year-old foster child, in her Detroit home.

Appellate Judges Patrick Meter, Michael Talbot and Donald Owens ruled that Adams-Rogers, 60, "was responsible for creating a home environment in which her foster child, Isaac, was physically abused."

The ruling was dated Tuesday and released Wednesday.

Isaac died Aug. 16, 2006, after being beaten and burned -- possibly by a hot iron -- over several days by someone inside Adams-Rogers' home, which, according to trial testimony, was loosely supervised. The home was occupied by Adams-Rogers, her three adopted children, several foster children, including Isaac and his 4-year-old sister, and a female caretaker.

Police have not positively identified the person responsible for Isaac's death, though suspicion has fallen on a girl, now 13, who was a troubled foster child before being adopted by Adams-Rogers.

The girl, just 12 when Isaac died, is in a new foster home and suffers from mental and emotional problems. She was one of two adopted girls who were minors and the focus of a state petition to terminate Adams-Rogers' parental rights after Isaac's death. She has not been charged with any crime. The other girl, now 2 1/2, also is in a new foster home.

Wayne County Family Court Judge Sheila Ann Gibson terminated Adams-Rogers' parental rights to the two girls in November.

The appeals court panel upheld Gibson's order, saying that under the "doctrine of anticipatory neglect or abuse," the judge was correct in considering how Isaac was treated as showing potential risk to other children in Adams-Rogers' care.

The panel said Adams-Rogers failed to provide a safe home for Isaac and failed to heed warnings from a doctor that Isaac probably was being abused in her home.

Wayne County Circuit Judge Vera Massey Jones -- who called Isaac's abuse torture -- sentenced Adams-Rogers to 5 1/2 to 15 years in prison on July 2 after she was convicted of involuntary manslaughter and second-degree child abuse in Isaac's death.

Contact **JACK KRESNAK** at 313-223-4544 or [jkresnak@freepress.com](mailto:jkresnak@freepress.com).

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July 19, 2007

## Hadwin trial delayed

**Kevin Hill**  
**Staff Writer**

A former day care director accused of not reporting child abuse won't stand trial until late October because of a death in her family.

Jury selection was to begin Monday in the trial of Jacqueline Hadwin at the 35th District Court in Plymouth, but Judge Ron Lowe instead adjourned the case until Oct. 29.

Lawyers for Hadwin said her father-in-law had died unexpectedly and requested the adjournment. Prosecutors consented and the trial was moved.

"We discussed all of the possibilities," said Lowe. "I think generally what was understood was beside her own loss she felt she should be there for her family, particularly her husband."

Postponements due to family matters aren't unusual, though the length of this one is. Lowe said since the trial has the potential to last seven days, he had to find the next free week on his calendar.

"Putting it off until October was a concern," said Lowe. "It could have gone either way with me."

Since the defense and prosecution said the delay was appropriate, Lowe agreed.

"It wasn't wholly unreasonable. I wouldn't have even hesitated to grant it, except that we were looking for an entire week that was available."

Hadwin, a Westland resident, is accused of failing to report child abuse while she was director of Childtime Learning Center, a day care in Plymouth. Prosecutors allege that she had reason to suspect that 2-year-old Allison Newman was being abused while Newman attended the day care last summer.

The toddler died in September while in the Canton home of her foster mother, Carol Poole. Poole is charged with felony murder, manslaughter and first-degree child abuse.

Lowe said he expected Hadwin's trial to last longer than a typical district court trial because of the attention given to Newman's death.

Failing to report child abuse is a misdemeanor, punishable by up to 93 days in jail or a \$500 fine, or both.

The state of Michigan suspended the day care's license shortly after the allegations against Hadwin came to light.

Amy Popp, a spokesperson for Childtime, said this week that the company, which operates several day cares in the region, continues to appeal the decision.

"We are still working to reopen it and we hope that will happen very soon," she said.

In the separate case, a circuit court judge last week denied a motion to dismiss the charges against Poole and scheduled an evidentiary hearing for July 28.

*Staff Writer Kevin Hill is blogging at **The Notepad**.*

<http://www.journalgroup.com/Canton/5298/hadwin-trial-delayed>

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# The Daily Telegram

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**THURSDAY JULY 19, 2007** Last modified: *Wednesday, July 18, 2007 9:15 AM EDT*

## Day care operator pleads guilty

Douglas Jay Clark faces a minimum of 25 years in prison for numerous charges of sexually abusing children.

By [Dennis Pelham](#)

Daily Telegram Staff Writer

ADRIAN — Now it's a question of whether day care operator Douglas Jay Clark will have a chance to leave prison before the end of his life.

With a trial looming in which jurors would see videotapes Clark allegedly made of himself sexually abusing children, the 53-year-old Adrian man made an unscheduled appearance Tuesday in a nearly-empty courtroom to plead guilty and no contest. His trial was replaced on the Lenawee County Circuit Court calendar with an Aug. 24 sentencing date.

"I think this was the best way to handle it for all concerned," said assistant Lenawee County Prosecutor Jonathan Poer. "He's pled out basically as charged on every victim," Poer said. He faces possible life prison terms, and children and other witnesses are spared having to testify publicly.

Clark was brought into court from an isolated holding cell, in the chains and orange Lenawee County Jail uniform he has worn since his March 10 arrest. Adrian police searched his Guardian Family Daycare in response to a parent's complaint and found video tapes and other evidence. Police said the tapes showed him performing oral sex on infants. Two older children described sexual molestations when questioned by police.

The offenses he was charged with occurred between 2003 and March this year although police received reports of possible molestations dating back years earlier before he obtained a state license for the day care center he and his wife ran from their home at 1013 Erie St.

Clark hung his head during most of the plea hearing Tuesday. He said guilty or no contest to seven of the 77 charges filed against him. He quietly answered questions about what he did, occasionally shaking his head slowly in apparent dismay at what was happening.

Judge Harvey A. Koselka asked Clark if his attorney explained what his convictions for first- and second-degree criminal sexual conduct will mean.

"I assume he's told you that you will be in prison for a very long time," Koselka said.

"Yes, your honor," Clark answered.

Public defender John Glaser said he told Clark the sentencing results would be the same whether he went to trial or pleaded guilty.

"I've estimated he will not get out, considering his age," Glaser said.

He faces a minimum 25 years in prison as a person older than 17 convicted of first-degree criminal sexual conduct against a victim younger than 13. Each of the six counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct he is convicted of carry up to life prison terms.

Although the videotapes and other evidence are overwhelming, it was decided there was no need to seek jury convictions on all 77 charges brought against Clark, said Poer.

“How many concurrent life sentences do you need?” Poer said. “It gives the judge the opportunity to send him away for a very long time.”

Adrian police are required to preserve the videotapes and other evidence to be available for potential appeals in the future. Poer said he believes the plea convictions will withstand any possible challenges.

Although Clark did not receive a psychological evaluation to confirm he is competent, Poer said there is no evidence Clark’s mental condition is an issue.

No testimony or evidence in the case has been put on court record so far except for Clark’s admissions on Tuesday. Clark waived preliminary examinations in district court where the prosecution would have had to show evidence that each of the 77 offenses occurred and that Clark committed them.

A pretrial hearing was scheduled last week in circuit court but Glaser simply told the court that he had decided not to file any motions. A jury trial was to begin Aug. 1.

The day care molestation case drew widespread attention after Clark was first charged in March and an Adrian police investigation was still under way. Adrian police said they received telephone calls from people reporting potential sex abuse by Clark dating back more than 20 years.

The plea agreement reached Tuesday included dropping potential charges involving two more victims. The incidents involving those children were reported after other charges were already filed, Poer said. No decisions had been made on authorizing charges in those cases.

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Article published Jul 19, 2007

Marshall man faces charges in girl's death

**Trace Christenson**

*The Enquirer*

MARSHALL — A 20-year-old Marshall man is expected in court today after his arrest in the death of a 4-year-old girl.

The child died Tuesday from suspected head injuries, according to Mike Olson, Marshall's public safety director.

The child, whose name was not being released, was taken to Oaklawn Hospital July 12 and later to Bronson Methodist Hospital in Kalamazoo, where she died.

The suspect, who is the boyfriend of the child's mother, was arrested Wednesday and is being held in the Calhoun County jail on open murder charges.

Olson said his name was being withheld until his arraignment in Calhoun County District Court.

"Fire and ambulance were sent to a medical (call) on South Kalamazoo Street for an unresponsive child," Olson said. "Based on the condition of the child, their focus was to render emergency medical care to the child. Later we were notified that we should respond because there appeared to be some suspicious circumstances, that there was some bruising that did not appear normal."

Olson said the boyfriend called for the ambulance and was at the home when they arrived. He was caring for the child while the mother was working.

An autopsy is scheduled today at Sparrow Hospital in Lansing.

Marshall police were assisted by Battle Creek police, Calhoun County Sheriff deputies and the Michigan State Police.

Olson said the investigation is continuing.

*Trace Christenson can be reached at 966-0685 or [tchrist@battlecr.gannett.com](mailto:tchrist@battlecr.gannett.com).*

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BERRIEN TRIAL COURT

July 19, 2007

## **Detective: Roseberry showed no emotion Doctor testifies 3-year-old's fatal injuries could not have been caused by casual play**

By JULIE SWIDWA  
H-P Staff Writer

ST. JOSEPH — When Detective Sgt. Robert O'Brien told Jonathon Roseberry that 3-year-old Glenn Ferguson had died, the first thing Roseberry said was, "I can't go to jail for murder," O'Brien said in court Wednesday.

Testifying in the second day of Roseberry's murder trial, the Benton Township police sergeant said Roseberry never showed any emotion about the youngster's death. The trial continues today.

Glenn, the son of Amber Palmateer of Benton Township, died at Bronson Methodist Hospital in Kalamazoo on Jan. 16 after surgeons were unable to repair internal injuries. Roseberry, Palmateer's live-in boyfriend at the time, has admitted to police that he punched Glenn twice but said he did not intend to seriously hurt him.

Roseberry, 26, is on trial in Judge Dennis Wiley's courtroom on charges of felony murder or second-degree murder. If convicted of murder during commission of a felony, child abuse, he would face life in prison without parole. Second-degree murder carries a maximum penalty of life in prison, with parole possible.

Berrien Assistant Prosecutor Jennifer Smith called 12 witnesses Wednesday, including several nurses who testified about Glenn's condition when he was brought to Lakeland Regional Medical Center in St. Joseph the night of Jan. 15.

Lisa Krumroy, a nurse in Lakeland's emergency room, cried as she told the jury the child was lethargic and moaning. She and other nurses testified that Glenn's abdomen was firm and distended.

Dr. Paula Coghlan was the first doctor to see Glenn.

"My first impression was that he was a very sick boy. I tried to talk to him, and he just moaned and groaned. Through X-rays and blood tests, doctors determined Glenn needed to be rushed to Bronson for surgery. Doctors there tried to repair a section of intestine that was nearly torn in two. Glenn died the next morning.

O'Brien said Roseberry initially told him that he had bounced Glenn on his knee while playing with him Jan. 14, and may have been too rough with him. After more was known about the nature of the child's fatal injuries, Roseberry admitted he had punched the boy, O'Brien told the court.



The child was taken to the hospital Jan. 15 after he vomited blood.

Dr. Stephen Cohle of Grand Rapids, a forensic pathologist, performed an autopsy on Glenn's body.

Roseberry removed his glasses and covered his eyes as the jury looked at autopsy photos on a screen in court. Cohle pointed out scrapes and bruises on the child's face, arms, shoulders, legs, back, buttocks and head. He testified that each of seven abrasions on the back of the child's head would represent a separate blow.

"The history that had been given to the doctors provided no explanation for all these bruises and abrasions," Cohle said.

The doctor said in his opinion, the child died of a blunt abdominal injury that included a torn intestine, and that the cause of death was homicide.

"It would take force like that of an adult striking someone with a knee, fist or elbow, with all of his or her force," Cohle told the court. "I have never seen a mild or incidental blow cause this type of injury. Casual play wouldn't cause this. It would have to be a punch to the stomach as hard as a person could punch."

Kippie Summerton, a teacher assistant at the Spinks Head Start School, said Glenn was a student there from the fall of 2006 until shortly before his death. She testified that the child had come to school with bruises and scrapes, and that when she asked him what happened he said, "Daddy made me fall down."

Summerton said school officials talked with Glenn's mother, and she provided an explanation for the bruises.

Roseberry was not Glenn's biological father but had been in a relationship with the child's mother for about three years and often was the boy's caretaker while his mother worked full time.

Matthew Rose, who was in the Berrien County jail at the time of Roseberry's arrest, testified that in a casual conversation, Roseberry told him he kneed and punched his stepson in the stomach in a "two-piece combination."

Rose said Roseberry told him he would hit the child because "his mother was too soft on him," and he wanted Glenn to grow up to be tough.

"I've got a kid about the same age. It kind of hurt," Rose told the court. "If it was my kid, I'd pray to God that someone would come forward. I didn't want anything in exchange."

Rose said he had about 20 or 30 days left to serve when he talked to a chaplain and two sheriff's deputies about what Roseberry had told him.

Under cross examination, Roseberry's lawyer, James Boardman of St. Joseph, asked if Roseberry ever said he intended to kill the little boy.

Rose responded, "No."

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Article published Jul 19, 2007

## Man going to prison for duct taping boy

By TIFFANY L. PARKS  
Staff Writer

A 90-second video tape has landed a Canton man in jail for one to four years after he pleaded guilty to second-degree child abuse.

The tape, which shook even the most seasoned Canton police officers, showed Andre Thornton Montgomery, 28, tormenting the 2-year-old son of his former girlfriend.

The child, who is now 4, was bound with duct tape around his hands, feet, mouth and eyes.

Montgomery was sentenced Friday by Judge Amy Hathaway in Wayne County Circuit Court.

The boy's mother stumbled across the tape one day in her home and alerted police. The child never had signs of physical abuse.

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DETROIT FREE PRESS

THURSDAY, JULY 19, 2007

**MT. CLEMENS**

**Hearing over Grant kids' custody is postponed**

The second custody hearing this week aimed to decide where Stephen Grant's two children will live has been postponed until Aug. 6.

Grant, 37, who is accused of strangling and dismembering his wife, already appeared in court Monday. A judge said then that his family should be allowed to see the children, ages 4 and 6.

On Wednesday, a referee was to consider a custody request from Tara Grant's sister, Alicia Standerfer. The children have been living with her since their father was arrested in early March.

Standerfer and Kelly Utykowski, Stephen Grant's sister, both want to keep the children permanently.

The Detroit News

Thursday, July 19, 2007

Macomb briefs

## **Mount Clemens: Custody trial delayed**

A hearing in the Stephen Grant custody trial that was scheduled for Wednesday was postponed until next month. Grant, who also is facing first-degree murder charges in connection with the strangulation and dismemberment of his wife, Tara, lost custody of his two children, ages 6 and 4. The hearing was moved back after Grant's sister, Kelly Utykanski, filed a motion Friday to adopt the two children. Tara Grant's sister, Alicia Standerfer, also wants to adopt the children. A hearing took place on Utykanski's motion Monday.

## Bands battled, but kids triumphed

By Sara Ramaker  
 Staff Writer

Wednesday, July 18, 2007 11:55 AM EDT

Although Ginormous and the Wee Ones took first place at a recent battle of the bands competition, area children and the Safe Harbor Children's Advocacy Center were the real winners.

The final round of "Bands Battling Abuse" took place July 7 at the Groundsphere Rhythm Caf/ in Allegan.

Seventeen bands from southwest Michigan competed in May and June to reach the finals, but Plainwell natives Ginormous and the Wee Ones captured first place based on advance ticket sales and audience votes.



**Ginormous and the Wee Ones battled for charity at Groundsphere Rhythm Caf/. (Photo provided)**

According to Elizabeth Siegler, Safe Harbor's fund development coordinator and forensic interviewer, "It was a very close competition. All of the bands scored very close to each other and all four bands played a really great show."

All six band members of the winning ska/pop/punk band are 2007 graduates of Plainwell High School. The lineup includes Connor Macklin on vocals and trumpet, Carter Cole on guitar and back-up vocals, Chad Mossman on bass, Jonathon Lowis on trumpet, Lee Shepick on trombone and Aaron Brown on drums.

"We all grew up together, from sixth grade on," Brown said.

According to their MySpace page, the band was formed in January 2006, when "a few of us felt like our lives had an empty space. The space was filled with a ska band."

Even though the members will spread out this fall to pursue college and career goals, they will still be a band. Brown said, "We'll try to get together and do shows on breaks."

"This is the third battle of the bands we've won," Brown said. "We've never had a bad response from a crowd."

The competition was a fundraiser for Safe Harbor Children's Advocacy Center in Allegan, sponsored by GetmadBaby.com and Groundsphere Rhythm Caf/.

"Our goal was to raise \$3,000," said Siegler. "We ended up raising \$3,180. It was thrilling."



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Published July 19, 2007



(Photo by BECKY SHINK/Lansing State Journal)

Opposition: Kevin Rowan of Reese protests against Senate Bill 232 during a small rally Wednesday at the Capitol.

#### At issue

- A small group of Saginaw County residents gathered Wednesday outside the state Capitol to protest proposed legislation that would privatize 60 percent - or about 20 percent more - of the state's foster care system. The move could mean a savings of \$19 million at the expense of 300 jobs. Yet those protesting Wednesday are concerned that already-abused and neglected children could be in danger if the private sector takes over their care. They fear fewer checks and balances.

#### Local numbers

The Michigan Department of Human Services reports that there are more than 18,000 kids in the state's foster care system. For the tri-county, the numbers are as follows:

- Ingham County: 748
- Clinton County: 150
- Eaton County: 109

## Parents protest foster care bill

Privatization measure debated in state Senate

Susan Vela  
Lansing State Journal

The group was small but hoped it was persuasive.

A handful of foster care parents and their children gathered Wednesday outside the Capitol to protest legislation that would hand 20 percent more of Michigan's foster care system to the private sector.

"I cannot believe they're trying to change this," said Hemlock resident Laura Woods of Saginaw County. She has adopted three foster kids.

Senate Bill 232 could save the state up to \$19 million, but that would come at the expense of at least 300 jobs held by state human services workers relating directly with more than 18,000 foster care children.

Everyone involved in the debate is concerned about kids. The bill's supporters say the legislation would leave the state with more time to do oversight work. The bill's opponents fear change and the private sector's ability to manage more foster care cases.

Right now, Michigan's foster care system is a network of administrators, caseworkers, therapists and others handling the recruitment, training and licensing of foster families, along with therapy and case management services. Forty percent of the Michigan Department of Human Services' foster care responsibilities already are privatized.

With children on the line, some can't help but fear change.

Foster care parent Kim Rowan is concerned about the increased caseloads for state Department of Human Services employees, which the agency confirmed could jump from 20 to 30.

### Nonprofit agencies

Almost every state in the nation has privatized some of its foster care system, experts say. The legislation, proposed by state Sen. Bill Hardiman, R-Kentwood, would raise Michigan's privatization level to 60 percent.

Hardiman said that his bill, if approved, would give the state more time for oversight. Also, all private sector agencies would have to be accredited on a national level and they would receive pay based on their care, he said.

In Ingham County, three private sector agencies - Child & Family Services, Capital Area; St. Vincent Catholic Charities; and Lutheran Social Services - are now managing foster care cases.

Child & Family Services manages 150 of the tri-county's 1,000-plus caseload.

"The bill, first of all, would only expand what we're doing successfully," said Jim Paparella, Child & Family Services' executive director. "If we take a good thing and expand it, wouldn't that make it greater?"

He emphasized that all the private agencies would have to be nonprofits under Hardiman's bill.

State money, though, can amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars.

**Different styles**

Paparella said the most recent monthly payment for Child & Family Services was about \$60,000 for 50 specialized care foster kids and about \$5,700 for about 100 general care foster kids.

His agency manages the case of Shannon Baker's 18-year-old foster son. The family lives in Dimondale.

Baker's only concern is that more agencies would want to enter the realm of foster care if the bill were passed and the agencies might become so different in their styles that parents will not confidently know which to pick.

"My No. 1 concern is really just the children and whatever is in their best interests," Baker said.

Wednesday's small group of protesters marched around the Capitol carrying signs that read "Vote No!," "Children are More than Money," and "Don't Use Experiments With Our Children."

They caught the attention of several state legislators, including state Rep. Joan Bauer, D-Lansing, who stopped by to ask a few questions. Bauer has long been concerned about privatizing services.

"Often, it sounds like it will save money," Bauer said. "(Yet) it often ends up costing taxpayers more in the long run."

She backed her argument with documents from a union-focused group detailing privatization's failures. One example was of the Michigan Department of Transportation privatizing some paving work and then ending up paying double what it would have cost if the state had done the work.

Contact Susan Vela at 702-4248 or [svela@lsj.com](mailto:svela@lsj.com).

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"I thought it went fairly well," Brown said. "Overall we brought out a lot of people and tried to raise money for the cause."

Brown and his band mates were rewarded for their performance with a photography package and a press kit package from GetMadbaby.com and \$100.

The other finalists, Axis and Fishlips, both of Kalamazoo and Skankhouse Gentlemen, of Plainwell receive photography packages as well.

Safe Harbor Children's Advocacy Center is a non-profit agency located in Allegan. The agency works to provide child abuse and neglect prevention, intervention, education and counseling.

For more information about Safe Harbor Children's Advocacy Center, call (269) 673-3791 or visit [www.safeharborallegan.org](http://www.safeharborallegan.org).

For more information about Ginormous and the Wee Ones, visit [www.myspace.com/ginormousandtheweeones](http://www.myspace.com/ginormousandtheweeones).

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## Parents protest planned privatization of foster care

Evening update

Susan Vela  
Lansing State Journal

Foster care parents and children gathered at the state Capitol today to protest legislation that would privatize more of Michigan's foster care system, now serving more than 18,000 children.

"We don't want it passed," said Laura Woods, a Saginaw County resident who has adopted three foster children.

The foster care parents are concerned about there being fewer checks and balances should legislators approve Senate Bill 232.

The proposed bill would place 60 percent - or 20 percent more - of the state's foster care cases into the private sector's control.

If approved in its present state, the bill would mean the elimination of hundreds of state jobs and a savings of approximately \$19 million.

Contact Susan Vela at 702-4248 or [svela@lsj.com](mailto:svela@lsj.com).

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## Senate Bill to Privatize Foster Care

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Senate Bill to Privatize Foster Care

Michigan foster parents spoke out at the capitol today. Their target was a bill aimed at privatizing the state's foster care system.

"I can't see putting them in the care of people that don't have 100 percent experience," said foster parent Kim Rowan

The proposal would shift the job of assigning homes to foster kids from the state to private-non profit organizations. All would be required to become licensed, accredited agencies.

"I think that's going to help to ensure good performance," said Senator Bill Hardiman. ☐

Senator Hardiman introduced the bill, and says the state can save money by making the move.

"Many of the private providers are drawing in funds from the community," said Hardiman. "They're part of the community, they're community based, so they're drawing in those funds."

The Michigan Department of Human Services doesn't see it that way-- and says the state can't put all of its resources for foster care into the private sector.

"Private organizations can't take care of all the children in the state," said Marianne Udow, Director of Human Services for the state of Michigan. "Geographically they're not located in every county in our state...They right now don't always have the capacity to deal with our most difficult situations."

Under Senator Hardiman's proposed plan, the state could cut more than \$19 million from it's budget in the first year. But it'd cost Michigan--by more than 830 jobs.

"He would shift about 2,000, 3,000 cases to the private sector, but he would cut our staff by 50%, and so that automatically increases our case loads," said Udow.

Whether the bill passes or not-- both the DHS and non-profit organizations says they're always looking for families.

"As new kids enter, if it's DHS or the private agencies, we're going to always be in need to recruit new homes," said Elizabeth Carey, of Michigan Federation for Children and Families. "We have some kids that don't always have the perfect placement."

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<http://www.wilx.com/news/headlines/8583327.html>



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## Foster Parents Protest at State Capitol

July 18, 2007 11:58 AM EDT

Foster parents gathered at the State Capitol to protest a proposed plan to privatize foster care. Lawmakers say the plan would save the state millions of dollars a year and provide better care for foster kids. Some foster parents fear that the children could get lost in the shuffle and that there aren't enough private companies to handle the kids properly.



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## Concerns Over Privatizing Foster Care Workers

July 19, 2007 06:40 AM EDT



They're some of our society's most-vulnerable citizens- foster children. There are about 18,000 foster kids in our state. The Department of Human Services handles many of their cases. A new state plan would put private companies in charge of some of the program, saving the state about 20 million dollars a year.

Some worry that plan could shortchange the kids. Kim Rowan's been a foster parent for more than 45 kids. It's her concern for the kids that had her protesting outside the State Capitol. She is concerned about a plan to privatize the state's foster care system.

Kim Rowan, foster parent who opposes new plan: "Our biggest fear is that this is not going to work and children are going to get lost in this experiment."

She says foster kids are vulnerable and have special needs best met by the government.

Kim Rowan: "We need highly-trained people to deal with these children."

Under the new plan, the government would provide more oversight, but private, accredited companies would handle most of the actual casework. Sherri Soloman runs St. Vincent Catholic Charities, a private foster care program. She says they go above and beyond for the kids in their care.

Sherri Soloman: "It's actually pretty exceptional standards for how the organization is run, what the expectation is for the children."

Plus, she says private programs don't have to worry about state budget problems.

Sherri Soloman: "We have ability also as private agencies to bring in private funding, which I think allows us in many ways to be more focused on children and their needs."

Everyone says they want what's best for the kids, but for Rowan, she says she worries about what will happen if this new plan doesn't work.

Kim Rowan: "The risk is too high."

The plan would save the state money in part by cutting staffing at the Department of Human Services by almost half. That's 800 workers. The director says that would put a huge strain on her department and hurt foster kids.

Marianne Udow, Department of Human Services: "We would increase our caseloads by 50%, we would have less ability to supervise the care of those children, we would have less ability to make sure they get the services that they need."

This bill still needs to be passed by the state senate and house.



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## Calvary Baptist Church helps DHS foster care service

Wednesday, July 18, 2007 11:33 AM EDT

To the editor: May was not only Foster Care Month in Michigan, but the last Sunday of the month was also celebrated as Civil Service Sunday by members of the Calvary Baptist Church of Holland.

For the last six years, Calvary Baptist has used this special Sunday to honor elected officials, police officers, fire fighters and judges.

This year the congregation and Pastor Mark Vroegop decided that Children's Protective Services and Foster Care Staff with the Allegan County Department of Human Services should be recognized for the vital role they play in the protection and well being of children in their community.

Pastor Vroegop and his wife are licensed foster parents with the Allegan County DHS and wrote, "We have personally observed the real sense of calling that you have to your profession, and we also realize that it is not very often that someone simply says, 'Thank you.'"

Calvary Baptist members also embraced a project in which they supplied the Allegan County DHS with 120 duffle bags filled with clothing and supplies for the first week when a child is placed in a foster home. The church family not only purchased the new bags and their contents but also provided new infant and toddler car seats, a high chair for the DHS office visitation room, 35 packages of diapers and nine large packages of baby wipes, toys, games and beautiful quilts and blankets.

I was a guest at the church's two May 27 services. I appeared with elected officials from west Michigan and spoke briefly about the challenges of abuse and neglect and poverty upon families. I also thanked the church members for their donations and prayers.

Pastor Vroegop's sermons were, fittingly, about social justice; he read from a letter written by a former Allegan County foster child who is now a husband, father and member of the Calvary Baptist Church.

Other members of the Allegan County DHS staff attending the church services were Lynne LaForest, foster care/adoption/juvenile justice supervisor; Lois Killgore, foster home licensing caseworker; and Jayne Brenner, Allegan County DHS board member.

*Susan Bailey-Carman*  
*Director*  
*Allegan County Department of Human Services*

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Article published Jul 19, 2007

Young voices cry for health

**Nick Schirripa**

*The Enquirer*

Trinity Freedom School students marched in downtown Battle Creek Wednesday morning chanting, "Health care, now," urging Congress to renew a program providing health care for thousands of Michigan children and millions more nationwide.

Madison Stewart, 8, was among the 39 student demonstrators. She said she was marching to help those who can't afford to help themselves.

"Some people have cancer and they don't have enough money to pay the bills for the things they need," she said. "We want everyone to try to stay healthy."

The State Children's Health Insurance Program, or SCHIP, is up for federal reauthorization this month, and some proposed changes may mean fewer Michigan children and adults would be able to get insurance through the state's MICHild program.

SCHIP had a \$25 billion budget for the past five years, and proponents of reauthorization say that amount needs to be closer to \$50 billion for the next five years to sustain current coverage levels.

According to state Department of Community Health officials, MICHild currently uses about \$149 million in federal SCHIP funding to cover some 30,000 children. There are an estimated 110,000 more children eligible for the program who currently are not covered, officials said.

With handmade signs and several teachers leading the march from the Trinity Lutheran Church, students paraded at the corner of North Division and Main streets.

Heather Cairns, 14, said children deserve to be insured to prevent suffering.

"Kids get sick all the time and it's usually something simple that could be stopped with medication their parents can't afford," she said. "It's not the children's fault their families can't pay for it. They shouldn't have to suffer."

The Rev. Colleen Nelson, site coordinator of Trinity Freedom School, said the march was part of a national effort of an estimated 8,000 students from 124 Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools.

"That's our emphasis, children's health care," she said. "Insuring children is one step toward insuring everybody."

There are three Freedom School sites in Battle Creek, Nelson said, and they are the only schools operating in the state this year.

The six-week Children's Defense Fund program provides summer and after-school curricula focusing on five components: Academics; parent and family involvement; social action and civil engagement; intergenerational leadership development; and nutrition and physical and mental health.

Students' participation in the march is part of social action and civil engagement, Nelson said.

"Nine million children in America are without health insurance; that's one in nine children in the richest country in the world," CDF President Marian Wright Edelman said in a press release. "It is appalling in this country that a child is born uninsured every 47 seconds, at greater risk of living sicker and dying sooner than an insured child.

"Not one adult has taken the leadership to provide health care to all children," Edelman said. "Since the adults aren't standing up children, the children in the CDF Freedom Schools program will stand up for themselves."

U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Lansing, said as a member of the Senate Finance Committee, she will fight for the SCHIP legislation, which would include more than \$200 million for Michigan next year.

"Providing the Children's Health Insurance Program with the resources needed to cover all eligible but uninsured children must be a priority for Congress," she said.

U.S. Rep. Tim Walberg, R-Tipton, believes in providing health coverage for low-income children, according to spokesman Matt Lahr, but Walberg wants the SCHIP's reauthorization paired with broader initiatives that allow more people to buy their own insurance.

"Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security are already going broke, and Congress must work to fix these programs to ensure they are sustainable into the future," Lahr said. "Expanding another entitlement without proper oversight will only create more promises that cannot be kept. The congressman looks forward to working with his colleagues to enact common-sense legislation that will responsibly build on the initial success of SCHIP."

*Nick Schirripa can be reached at 966-0692 or [nschirrip@battlecr.gannett.com](mailto:nschirrip@battlecr.gannett.com).*

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July 19, 2007

**PAGE ONE****LOCKED OUT**

## Note to Medicaid Patients: The Doctor Won't See You

**As Program Cuts Fees,  
MDs Drop Out; Hurdle  
For Expansion of Care**

By **VANESSA FUHRMANS**  
*July 19, 2007; Page A1*

BENTON HARBOR, Mich. -- Medicaid provides health-care coverage for millions of Americans - but a growing number of doctors won't accept it.

In February, Jada Garrett, a 16-year-old sophomore, developed what seemed at first a mild case of strep throat. Within a couple of weeks her joints ballooned. Many afternoons, her swollen ankles hurt too much to walk.

**INSURANCE ADJUSTMENTS**

- **The Situation:** The number of doctors who will accept Medicaid patients is dwindling.
- **The Background:** Straining under higher costs, Medicaid has been freezing or slashing fees to doctors.
- **What's at Stake:** The issue could be a hurdle to some states' efforts to broaden health-care coverage by expanding Medicaid eligibility.

To get to the bottom of her symptoms, Jada needed to see a rheumatologist. But the local one listed in her Medicaid plan's network wouldn't see her in his office. The wait to get into a clinic was more than three months. By the time she found a rheumatologist in a nearby county to take her in mid-April, Jada's debilitating pain had caused her to miss several weeks of school.

"You feel so helpless thinking, something's wrong with this child and I can't even get her into a doctor," says Jada's mother, Nicole Garrett, who enrolled her three teenage daughters in Medicaid after they lost private coverage. "When we had real insurance, we could call and come in at the drop of a hat."

On paper, Jada's Medicaid coverage is real insurance. Funded jointly by states and the federal government, the safety-net program is intended to provide comprehensive health-care coverage for more than 50 million Americans too poor or disabled to afford it elsewhere. Like the majority of Medicaid recipients in Michigan, Jada receives her benefits through a private health-maintenance organization contracted by Medicaid to administer the program.


**Nicole Garrett**

But when Medicaid patients seek care, they often find themselves locked out of the medical system. In a 2006 report from the Center for Studying Health System Change, a nonprofit research group based in Washington, nearly half of all doctors polled said they had stopped accepting or limited the number of new Medicaid patients.

That's because many Medicaid programs, straining under surging costs, are balancing their budgets by freezing or reducing payments to doctors. That in turn is driving many doctors, particularly specialists, out of the program.

The dwindling number of doctors who accept Medicaid is a large, little-discussed hurdle to some ambitious efforts to broaden health-care coverage. Expanding Medicaid eligibility or using the private Medicaid HMOs is a linchpin in universal-coverage initiatives in Massachusetts and other states -- as well as some 2008 presidential candidates' platforms.

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**DIGEST OF EARNINGS**

Details of the latest corporate earnings reported for FREE.

In California, a key component of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's universal coverage proposal calls for a controversial 2% to 4% surcharge on doctors' and hospitals' revenues. The money would be used to pay for higher Medicaid fees so that doctors will take in more enrollees. About 51% of family physicians in California participate in Medicaid. For a number of specialties, such as orthopedic surgery, the percentage is much lower, according to the California HealthCare Foundation.

Michigan's governor, Jennifer Granholm, is also pushing a plan to extend coverage to more than 500,000 of the state's uninsured. Because physician groups have balked at taking more people at Medicaid-level reimbursements, policy makers hope the new program will pay doctors rates similar to Medicare -- about two-thirds higher than Medicaid. But many people fear that will give doctors even less reason to accept people on Medicaid.

In Michigan, the number of doctors who will see Medicaid patients has fallen from 88% in 1999 to 64% in 2005. Many of those doctors tightly cap how many they'll see or refuse to take on new Medicaid patients. At the same time, enrollment in the program in Michigan has risen more than 50% to nearly 1.6 million since 1999.

Paul Reinhart, the state's Medicaid director, says he doesn't believe difficulties finding specialists is a pervasive issue. But he acknowledges that patients can run into access problems. "That's a problem that we're working on and one that probably can only really be resolved with increased [fees]," he says. To safeguard against access problems, his agency requires the plans to have at least one primary-care physician for every 750 people in a given region. The program also checks a few times a year whether the specialists listed in the plans' networks are indeed available.

"At this point, I have to pay money out of my own pocket to take care of that [Medicaid] patient, and it's only going to get worse," says AppaRao Mukkamala, president of the Michigan State Medical Society and a radiologist in Flint, Mich. There, auto-industry layoffs have helped push one in five people onto Medicaid or into the ranks of the uninsured.

For every chest X-ray Dr. Mukkamala performs, for instance, Medicaid pays him \$20. Commercial insurers such as Blue Cross pay about \$33 and Medicare pays \$30. But with technicians, film and other equipment, his costs are about \$29 per X-ray, he estimates. Medicaid patients he sees at Hurley Medical Center in Flint make up 28% of his work there.

Like many states, Michigan hires private Medicaid HMOs to administer benefits. The state pays HMOs a monthly fee for each patient. The HMOs then pay doctors, usually amounts close to government-set payments. As in many states, the managed-care plans win Medicaid contracts based partly on how robust their networks of doctors and hospitals are.

The HMOs' directories of network providers in Michigan seem full, but phone calls to listed specialists in some places find big holes. The three HMOs which operate in the county around Benton Harbor -- Community Choice, Great Lakes Health Plan and Health Plan of Michigan -- post on their Web sites lists of local specialists participating in their network.

Of the 11 obstetrician-gynecologists that Community Choice lists for Berrien County, four doctors said they were listed in error, and another one no longer practices in the area. One took only Medicaid patients referred to her by doctors within her practice. Three others were only seeing new Medicaid patients at a nearby clinic, not in their offices. And two more were taking patients at the same clinic.

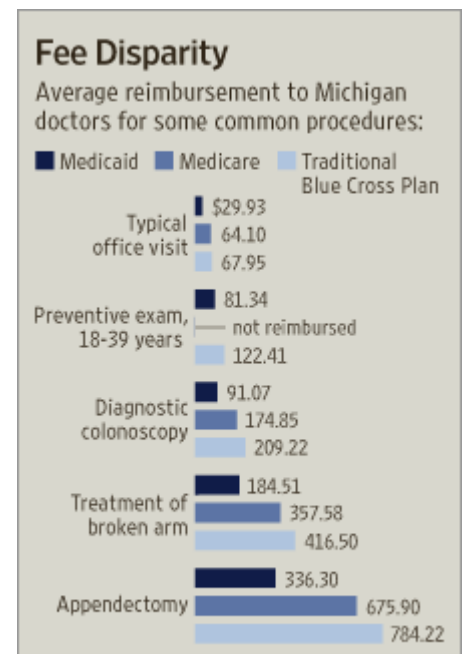
Many doctors on Health Plan of Michigan's list, which includes many of the same names, had similar restrictions. Great Lakes' Web site noted that none of the six on its ob-gyn list were accepting new patients.

All three HMOs' listed gastroenterologists -- another high-demand specialist area -- only saw Medicaid patients at an offsite clinic where appointment waits can be three to nine months.

The health plans say they encourage members and their referring doctors to call them if they have trouble getting an appointment with a specialist. "We can't just rely on what's in the directory -- it would be our obligation to help any member," says Pamela Morris, president of CareSource Management Group, which manages Community Choice's health plan. She adds that a wait of several months is "unacceptable." The company says that all of the doctors in its directory are indeed contracted with it. It says sometimes staff at medical practices make mistakes about what plans they accept.

Health Plan of Michigan's chief operating officer, Shery Cotton, says that in some places, it will pay doctors bonuses to encourage them to see ob-gyn patients. It also periodically checks in with primary doctors to see if their Medicaid patients are being refused by specialists. And it doesn't require plan members to use just network doctors.

But Ms. Cotton acknowledges that low reimbursements from the state sometimes make raising participation a struggle: "We literally get on the phone with doctors and beg, 'Will you see this patient?'"



Steve Matthews, a spokesman for AmeriChoice, the Medicaid arm of UnitedHealth Group Inc., which owns Great Lakes Health Plan, said that the plan's customer-service records don't show a doctor-access problem in Benton Harbor. He added that if a patient has difficulty, the company will help set up an appointment "anywhere in the state, regardless of whether they're in the network." Many primary-care doctors, however, say they don't have the time or resources to call the plans for all of the patients for whom they have trouble finding referrals.

Robert Ward III, a neurologist in nearby St. Joseph, says the only new Medicaid patients his practice now sees are those who were admitted to the local hospital first. Occasionally, he will see a patient referred by a doctor he knows. But all three of the local Medicaid HMOs have Dr. Ward listed as a network provider -- only Great Lakes Health Plan's Web site notes that he isn't accepting new patients. Dr. Ward says his office has pointed this out to the Medicaid plans.

When he started his practice in the early 1990s, Dr. Ward says he placed no limits and Medicaid patients flocked to his practice. Medicaid patients soon ballooned to 35% of his roster.

"It was a rookie mistake," says Dr. Ward, one of only two full-time neurologists in the tri-county area.

Commercial health plans such as Blue Cross pay him between \$72 and \$85 for a typical neurological exam. He receives about \$31 from the Medicaid plans. Now, 12% of his patients are on Medicaid.

Southwestern Medical Clinic, a multispecialty group, sees some Medicaid patients in its offices across the county because of its involvement in Christian-based medical mission work. That group now accounts for some 20% of the clinic's patient mix. Yet the clinic limits many appointments to Medicaid patients who live in the same or surrounding ZIP codes of its various branches.

"We don't want people driving past their community provider to come see us," says Kenneth O'Neill, Southwestern's medical director. "Otherwise the model of everyone doing their fair share starts to fall apart."

Delays in getting treatment can have serious consequences. Jennifer Kinchen, 47, enrolled in Medicaid in late 2005, after Hurricane Katrina forced her to leave her home in Louisiana and move near family in Benton Harbor. Since late last year, she has suffered from tremors severe enough to cause her to drop her coffee mug or sometimes fall, liver problems and high levels of ammonia in her blood.

Her family doctor has searched and waited to get her an appointment with a neurologist or gastroenterologist. In the meantime, Ms. Kinchen has gone to the emergency room a few times because of dehydration and blacking out.

In Benton Harbor, more than 300 patients lost access to counseling services after the main provider of Medicaid mental-health services, Riverwood Center, stopped accepting payments from Medicaid HMOs. Riverwood says the reimbursements it was receiving from the Medicaid HMOs for outpatient sessions didn't cover their costs.

Payment delays and other administrative hassles compounded the crunch, says Riverwood's president, Allen Edlefson. The center lost \$350,000 in 2003, the year before it decided to quit its Medicaid HMO contracts. "It was a painful decision, but we just couldn't make it work financially," he says.

The Medicaid HMOs helped slow costs by more tightly managing care, such as reducing hospital admissions and assuring that recipients are at least assigned a primary-care doctor. The state estimates HMOs have saved Medicaid more than \$300 million annually in recent years.

Nestled along Lake Michigan's southeastern shore, Benton Harbor has been hard hit by job losses. Manufacturers have steadily cut or relocated elsewhere good-paying union jobs with health benefits. About a quarter of the community of 12,000, poor and predominantly black, are unemployed.

As the city's middle class dwindled, most doctors, along with the hospital, relocated in the late 1980s and early 1990s across the St. Joseph River to its much more affluent twin, St. Joseph, a picturesque lake-resort town. Most of those doctors are listed in HMO networks but many don't accept Medicaid patients in their offices. Instead, many spend an afternoon every one or two weeks seeing Medicaid patients at a clinic set up in a building that once housed Benton Harbor's hospital.



The doctors say they prefer the arrangement because the clinic -- which is run by the St. Joseph hospital -- pays them a flat rate for the afternoon, instead of Medicaid fees for each service. They don't have to worry about the administrative hassle of filing claims or no-show patients -- a common problem since many Medicaid recipients don't have ready transportation. But for patients, this can mean waiting months for an appointment.

The specialist crunch means that more of the burden is falling on primary-care physicians such as Don Tynes. Dr. Tynes runs one of the few primary-care practices left in Benton Harbor. Three years ago, he left his job as a salaried physician in a local community health center to set up his own practice in a former

dry-cleaning shop across from Benton Harbor high school.

"I don't want to pull any punches taking care of people," says Dr. Tynes. "I'm a spiritual man, not a businessman." In his waiting room, gospel movies play round the clock on a DVD player and patients can sign up for his weight-loss coaching.

On a recent day, 22 out of the 37 patients were on Medicaid, and another 12 had Medicare or other government-sponsored insurance. Only three had commercial health coverage. Dr. Tynes tries to make ends meet with a bare-bones staff. He has also cultivated a loyal patient base by offering specialty services such as sexual-dysfunction treatment and marriage counseling. Depending on how good business is, he tries to pay himself an after-tax salary of \$500 to \$750 a week to support his family of five children.

But three times so far this year, he's forgone his biweekly paycheck to keep the practice out of the red. Last year, he cut his office staff from seven to four people. "We [primary-care physicians] are the ones keeping this Medicaid system together, but we're the ones getting killed," he says.

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Published July 19, 2007

#### What's next

- A preliminary hearing for Thomas Joseph Mack, who has been found competent to stand trial, is scheduled for July 30 in 54A District Court.
- The preliminary hearing determines if the case advances to trial.

#### Your take

In murder cases, at what age should a child be charged as an adult? Give us Your Take at [www.lsj.com](http://www.lsj.com)

## Lansing teen may face trial in death

Prosecutor: No decision yet if youth would be tried as adult in shooting of foster brother

Kevin Grasha  
Lansing State Journal

Fifteen-year-old Thomas Joseph Mack has been found competent to stand trial in the shooting death of his younger foster brother, prosecutors confirmed Wednesday.

Mack, who turns 16 on Friday, is accused of shooting 14-year-old Daniel Brock Austin on April 3 at the East Hillsdale Street apartment where their foster parents' adult son lived.

Ingham County Prosecutor Stuart Dunnings III said Wednesday he still has not made a final determination about whether he will prosecute Mack as an adult.

"Circumstances in this case are causing me to wonder how I will proceed," he said. Dunnings said he believed his office has prosecuted as an adult every juvenile accused of murder in its jurisdiction.

Mack is charged with first-degree murder, or in the alternative, second-degree murder.

If convicted of first-degree murder, Mack would be sentenced to life in prison without parole. A second-degree murder conviction is punishable by a sentence of up to life in prison.

Dunnings said he initially charged Mack as an adult so "we could have the benefit of a psychiatric evaluation in light of his history." That would not have been possible if the case went to the juvenile system.

In April, Lansing District Judge Charles Filice ordered Mack to undergo competency tests at the Center for Forensic Psychiatry in Ypsilanti. Based on those results, which are not public, Filice ruled July 3 that Mack could be tried for murder.

A preliminary hearing, which determines if the case advances to trial, is set for July 30 in 54A District Court.

### **In and out of foster care**

Mack has been in and out of several foster homes and spent time in two youth homes, according to court records. He has received psychiatric and psychological therapy, his attorney has said in court. Mack's mother gave up her parental rights when he was 11.

The boys' foster parents, Steve and Judy Stragier of Lansing, did not return phone calls seeking comment.

No children are now placed with the Stragiers, and their foster home license is in jeopardy, said Michigan Department of Human Services spokeswoman Karen Stock.

All children under the care of the Stragiers were removed from their home after the incident.

Stock said the private agency, St. Vincent Catholic Charities, that placed children with the Stragiers has recommended their license be revoked.

"Now it is in the hands of our staff," Stock said.

### **Held at county jail**

Mack is being held without bond at the Ingham County Jail.

Mack's attorney, Keith Watson, previously has requested that Mack be held at the county's youth facility.

"That seems to be the better alternative," Watson said Wednesday. He did not want to comment further.

Ingham County sheriff's Lt. Cindy Martin said juveniles like Mack are held in a separate section of the jail.

"He's separated sight and sound from the adult inmates," Martin said.

Contact Kevin Grasha at 267-1347 or [kgrasha@lsj.com](mailto:kgrasha@lsj.com).

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July 19, 2007

## Teens denied bond in probe of fatal accident

Norman Sinclair / The Detroit News

**DETROIT** -- Two boys, ages 14 and 16, were denied bond Wednesday by a Wayne County Juvenile Court referee while prosecutors weigh possible charges against the youths in the death of 56-year-old Gwendolyn Leonard-Hall.

Leonard-Hall was sitting in a motorized wheelchair in front of Wayne State's University Plaza Tuesday afternoon when she was struck by a stolen Jeep Cherokee eluding campus police. The boys were apprehended by police as they ran from the wrecked Cherokee.

In a brief hearing Wednesday afternoon, prosecutors asked Referee David Perkins for a five-day extension on bringing charges to fully investigate the incident.

Wayne State University Department of Public Safety officers, who were conducting surveillance in the area because of a rash of thefts, said they saw the teens steal a Jeep Cherokee on Tuesday near the university's athletic complex at Warren Avenue and Trumbull, according to campus police Chief Anthony Holt.

The younger suspect spotted uniformed officers who were responding to a call from the undercover officers and he sped off at a high rate of speed, Holt said. The Cherokee hit a Jeep Liberty on Warren east of the Lodge Freeway, struck a sign post before hitting Hall in her wheelchair on the sidewalk, Holt said.

Leonard-Hall was taken to Detroit Receiving Hospital, where she later died.

The driver of the Liberty also was taken to the hospital and was listed in serious condition

*You can reach Norman Sinclair at (313) 222-2034 or [nsinclair@detnews.com](mailto:nsinclair@detnews.com).*

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## KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

### **Murder-suicide suspected in Dowagiac deaths**

Wednesday, July 18, 2007

#### **Gazette Staff Reports**

A husband and wife were found shot to death Monday evening inside a Dowagiac residence, authorities said.

The incident appears to be a murder-suicide, according to a Dowagiac Police Department news release.

Police found 45-year-old Michael Lee Simpson and 41-year-old Denise Lynn Simpson at 506 N. Front St. after being dispatched to that location for a welfare check. The Simpsons were married but living separately, police said.

Police are not providing any additional information, pending further investigation. Once the investigation is complete, the matter will be reviewed by the Cass County Prosecutor's Office.

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Article published Jul 19, 2007

## Woman scammed in fake lottery deal

An elderly Marion Township woman who said she was “under a spell” lost \$15,000 in a fraudulent Canadian lottery scheme, Livingston County sheriff’s deputies said.

The 77-year-old woman said she went to Wal-Mart in Genoa Township “four or five times” and sent MoneyGrams to a Canadian address as instructed by an unknown male caller who claimed she had won a lottery.

The woman said she suspected something was not right, but found herself “under a spell” and hoping the claim she won millions of dollars was true.

The incident was reported to police at about 10:30 a.m. June 1 after the woman realized she was not receiving any winnings.

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## State jobless rate tops the nation in June

LANSING (AP) — Michigan's unemployment rate rose to 7.2 percent in June, the highest point so far this year, the state announced Wednesday.

The May seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 6.9 percent already was highest among the 50 states.

June's even-higher rate means many new college graduates and students seeking summer work in Michigan probably have been disappointed, a state official said.

"Early indications are showing a more sluggish season for youth hiring," said Rick Waclawek, director of the state's Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives.

The national jobless rate for June was 4.5 percent.

Michigan's latest rate of 7.2 percent was half a percentage point higher than June 2006, when the rate was 6.7 percent. Although the state added 4,000 manufacturing jobs from May to June, continued cuts in manufacturing are a major factor pushing the jobless rate up, Waclawek said.



## Needy hungry again? Maybe we should do something

Thursday, July 19, 2007

BROOKLYN -- I can't believe the people we helped feed in our area back at Christmas are hungry again! It's only been six months since the last time we donated food to the needy.

Gee, the last time I ate was at breakfast today, and I am going out to lunch with some friends at noon and my family is planning to have dinner this evening at one of Jackson's finest restaurants. And these folks in need are asking me for food again.

I guess I can justify to God that the price of gas is too high, or my prescription cost is out of sight, or my sewer bill just came in, or taxes are too high. That's why I can't give to the unfortunate people of our area because I am too busy wiping my fat face at my favorite restaurant week after week. I hope God believes me.

I hope I am not sounding too arrogant, but I have listened to all churches and food-assistance agencies in our area crying for donations for food and other staple items. I am looking at my own parish pantry today and seeing Mother Hubbard shelves still empty after my pastor made a plea for food for the needy. I have visited other churches and seen the same empty pantries, and have seen food agencies turn away the hungry because they were out of food.

I call on all Christians to take a couple of bags of food into your church or agency, and see if God doesn't touch your lives. Don't be afraid if your neighbor sees you: This is a pretty catchy disease.

-- Steve Sacka

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## State to release low-risk offenders; DCCAH to determine their future

By Mary Feldhusen

[mfeldhusen@dailypress.net](mailto:mfeldhusen@dailypress.net)

ESCANABA — Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm in February proposed an early prisoner release of low-risk offenders. The Delta County Coalition Against Homelessness (DCCAH) will be responsible for determining what happens to inmates who are released to the jurisdiction of Delta County.

One of the coalition's goals is to create a process to reacclimate prisoners released from state and county facilities to the community. It's part of the group's 10-year plan to eliminate homelessness in Delta County. (See main story.)

The coalition's been told the state plans to release approximately 300 prisoners to Region 1, the Upper Peninsula, beginning in October, said Maj. Bill Cox of Escanaba's Salvation Army and DCCAH member. Anywhere from eight to 30 of those inmates will come to Delta County.

"The state is trying to cut prison costs by releasing older prisoners in the system," Cox said. "We're trying to get organized to deal with it. We're trying to have a plan for every one of the prisoners so they're not just on the streets getting into trouble."

Released prisoners are expected to first go to a camp in Traverse City this fall. They will be put through a program to prepare them to return to communities throughout the state, said Cox.

"As an idealist I say if a guy's done a crime and done his time, his slate should be clear, but that's not the way it is," said Cox.

Released prisoners will need affordable housing and employment. Some will have to go to rehabilitation centers. Approximately 85 percent of those released will be single men and women, Cox said. They will face a number of hurdles in trying to establish themselves in the community.

No assistance is available from the county's Department of Human Services for single individuals, Cox said.

Since most were probably convicted of felonies they will also have difficulty securing employment.

In addition, Delta County has little housing available for singles, said Cox.

And people convicted of felonies are not eligible for Housing and Urban Development (HUD) subsidized housing. The coalition asked U.S. Sen. Carl Levin to look into the HUD requirements to see what can be done to allow eligibility to those with felony convictions, Cox said.

"The state wants to lower the recidivism rate so they're not going back to jail," Cox said. "The best way to do that is to have plan."

Part of the coalition's plan is to try to make the community aware of the homeless problem, be advocates for the homeless and for affordable housing.

"There are homeless whether they think it's significant or not," said Cox.

"A dream that I have, but again it takes money, is to somehow tie prisoner re-entry in with education to get a job," Cox said.

The governor is really big on pushing the importance of a college education.

But, frankly, the areas of technical and vocational training are more in demand, said Cox.

"How best are we going to spend the money and make it work?" Cox said.

The governor proposed reducing the state's jail population by 10 percent to save the state about \$122 million. Michigan is looking at an annual cost of \$30,000 to keep a prisoner in jail versus a cost of \$1,600 to release him or her to area communities, Cox noted.

"We need to help the chronically homeless," said Cox. "We're hoping we can find some kind of answers. The good news is we've got a bunch of wonderful people across the U.P. trying to make sure prisoners are taken care of."



## Mayor attacked over refugees

His concern that the Iraqis' arrival could burden services is seen as bigotry

July 19, 2007

BY DAN CORTEZ and NIRAJ WARIKOO

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITERS

Chaldean leaders expressed outrage Wednesday after Warren Mayor Mark Steenbergh blasted a federal plan that could place thousands of Iraqi refugees in Warren and Sterling Heights in the coming months.

Steenbergh said he was concerned that as many as 15,000 refugees could arrive in the two cities, based on federal officials' estimate of how many refugees could come to the United States this year and the city's interpretation of conversations with county officials.

Steenbergh said two-thirds of the applicants for refugee status indicated that they have relatives in the area.

"I've been told that these refugees will be given assistance in locating housing and in learning English," Steenbergh said in a statement.

"Will the City of Warren receive assistance for the burden placed upon our services with so many people set to arrive?"

Steenbergh's comments were quickly attacked.

"All the stuff he put in his press release is inaccurate," said Martin Manna, head of the Chaldean Chamber of Commerce. "It's all inaccurate. It smells of bigotry."

Moreover, Chaldean leaders said, the refugees will be an asset, not a burden.

"Nobody knows for sure" how many will be arriving, said Joseph Kassab, who is working with the Chaldean Federation of America to help Iraqi refugees.

"I don't think we need to make such a hoopla about this. This is solely a humanitarian issue."

A spokeswoman for the U.S. Department of State, Leslie Phillips, said that the United States could take in up to 7,000 Iraqi refugees by the end of September.

U.S. Rep. Sander Levin, D-Mich., called Steenbergh's statements "inaccurate and misleading."

In a statement released by his office, the Royal Oak congressman said priority for resettlement will not be based on contact with family or others already in an area.

A local group that works on resettling refugees, the Detroit-based Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, said that it's unclear how many refugees would be coming to Warren.

In the past, refugees have been more likely to be put up in cities such as Hamtramck, where they can more easily walk to places, instead of relying on cars.

"Nobody knows for sure" how many refugees from Iraq are coming, said Barbara Lewis, who works with the group.

Steve Guitar, community relations director for Sterling Heights, said the city expects that about half of the 90 refugees expected to move to Michigan next month will settle in either Sterling Heights or Warren.

Warren has not been the most welcoming community for immigrants from the Middle East. In the past year, an Assyrian church and a mosque in the city have been the targets of vandalism.

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## Sheriff's department to sell seized car

By SUE LATUSZEK

Alpena News

Alpena County Finance Committee members unanimously approved the sale of a vehicle seized by the sheriff's department on eBay.

The 2005 Ford Mustang GT was forfeited recently by a man arrested five times for operating under the influence of liquor, said Undersheriff Terry King. An identical model, with higher mileage, sold on eBay Wednesday morning for \$20,100, he said.

"I'm not saying we'll get that (amount)," King said. "If we got \$18,000 I'd be tickled pink."

The vehicles' blue book value is \$26,000.

The majority of the proceeds from the sale will go to the sheriff's department and a percentage will go to the county prosecutor's office, courts and crime victims fund. A \$40 insertion fee and \$50 transaction fee from eBay will be taken out of the department's proceeds, as well as \$700 for storage of the vehicle when it was originally impounded.

Committee members unanimously approved recommending the full board of commissioners authorize sale of the vehicle through eBay.

In other business:

? Committee members recommended approval of converting an unused closet into a gun locker at the sheriff's department. The \$300 cost will be taken from the building maintenance fund.

**? Maintenance Superintendent Tom Christianson was given permission to move forward with repairs to one boiler at the Department of Human Services building. Repairs to a second boiler will be budgeted for next**



**year.**

? Emergency Services Coordinator Michael Szor was given approval to purchase a \$6,100 used radio console to make a third dispatcher station in the central dispatch office fully functional. The cost includes the equipment and all associated wiring.

? Committee members unanimously recommended approval of second quarter budget adjustments, increasing revenue by \$71,388 and expenses by \$16,036.

? Approval of a five-year lease for the Senior Citizens Center building was recommended unanimously.

? Approval of a county purchasing policy was recommended unanimously.

**? Committee members unanimously voted to recommend approval of and authorization for the chair to sign a grant for the DHS Office of Child Support Cooperative Reimbursement Contract.**

? Committee members unanimously voted to recommend approval for district court to use \$11,979 received from the Drunk Driving Caseflow Assistance Fund to purchase needed equipment.

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